

The Vigilante

by Fleataxi

Jenni Hicks was a beautiful blonde cheerleader, the homecoming Queen, and one of the most popular girls in school. One Thursday, she had just left the front door of St. Mary's Catholic school and turned down the street to walk the 2 blocks to the bus stop as she did every day, when a van pulled to the curb, and 4 strong arms grabbed her from behind and slapped a wet cloth over her mouth and nose before she could get a scream out. As she inhaled to scream, she passed out. The van drove quickly away before anyone realized what had happened.

Later, Jenni awoke lying naked on a cold dark concrete floor, hurting all over. Suddenly, a single bright light shone over her face blinding her, and a naked man stood over her. "Hi, Jenni, I'm Nicky, and you belong to me."

"What the fuck are you talking about, My name's Jenni Hicks, and when my dad finds out, he'll kill you!"

"Your dad doesn't know you're here, and when I'm finished with you - you'll disappear and no one will know you except me!"

Jenni screamed and it didn't seem to phase Nicky at all. Nicky nodded, and 4 strong arms pinned her to the ground, and it started again. She awoke with something in her mouth, and realizing what it was, bit down hard. The last thing she heard was Nicky's scream, then the blows started, and she passed out.

Nicky savagely beat her for hours, and when he was finished, he ordered his lieutenant Spike to dump her body somewhere and get back there. They needed to find another girl.

Later that evening, a homeless man spotted Jenni's nude body dumped next to a dumpster. Out of curiosity he felt for her pulse, and her eyes opened. Her pleading look made him decide to walk a block, and drag a Newark cop back to the scene of the crime. His frantic radio calls brought a ALS ambulance from University Hospital, the closest Trauma Center. Looking at the wounds inflicted on her body, the hardened street cop turned and broke down crying even though he'd seen everything. He'd imagined the girl in front of him was once pretty, but she was no longer recognizable as being human. The Paramedics finally arrived, and quickly put her on a stretcher and got her into the ambulance. One paramedic was amazed she was alive, and the other thought that as badly beaten and broken as she was, she might be better off dying, but they kept working on her. 2 minutes later they arrived at the Ambulance entrance, and they were met by the trauma team. The ER resident in charge took one look at her body and said

“Jesus Christ, who could do this to another person?”

They got her to Trauma Room 1 as fast as they could, and quickly got her stabilized. The tests came back indicating a ruptured spleen, and bruised liver and kidneys, and that was on top of numerous cigarette burns, cuts, two broken arms, various lacerations of the skin and scalp, and a fracture of the lower leg that looked like someone hit it with a lead pipe. Her face and head looked like someone had tried to break every bone in her face and head, and had succeeded. She spent the next 12 hours in surgery fixing the damage. The last people to work on her were a plastic and a maxillary surgeon who tried as best as they could to reconstruct her face. The plastic surgeon could tell from her bone structure that she had once been beautiful, so he tried extra hard to keep her from looking hideous.

Two days later, when they realized she was going to survive, they were forced to use dental records to ID her, since her prints came back unknown. The Hospital Chaplain drove with a Police Lieutenant to the last known address of the victim. They knocked on the door, and the Police Lieutenant said “Lisa Hicks?”

“That’s me officer?”

“Do you have a daughter named Jennifer Hicks?”

“Yes, she’s been missing for over a week? Did you find her?”

“I’m sorry Ma’am, she’s in University Hospital in Critical condition. If you come with us, we’ll drive you there.”

Lisa flew into panic mode, grabbed her purse and her jacket, wrote a quick note to Ron in case he came home, and locked the door. She rode in the back with the Chaplain, and took out her Rosary beads and prayed all the way to the hospital. When she got there, the ER attending took her aside, and tried to explain to the frantic mother that her daughter was alive, but had almost been beaten to death, and might not be recognizable.

“I want to see her right now!”

“Ok, Mrs. Hicks, I wanted to warn you first. Here, put on this gown and mask first, she’s in ICU and you can’t touch her yet in case you give her an infection.”

When they opened the door and Lisa got a good look at her daughter, she screamed “Mother of God” and fainted. She awoke 2 hours later in a hospital bed. A doctor was looking at her.

“Mrs. Hicks, you went into hysterics and fainted. We had to sedate you for your own protection. Jennifer is still in the ICU, but we don’t think it would be a good idea to see her

right now. Is there anyone we can call?"

"My Son Ron works construction in downtown Newark, and my husband Tom is overseas in Desert Storm. He's a Special Forces Sergeant. My cell phone is in my purse, and their numbers are programmed in there."

"We'll have someone call them. You need to rest, so try to sleep. One last thing, do you have a picture of Jennifer?"

"There's one in my wallet. Why?"

"The plastic surgeons can use it to hopefully rebuild her face."

"My God, what did they do to her?"

"Mrs. Hicks, she's been badly beaten, every bone in her face has been broken, and she had a skull fracture too."

Lisa looked at the doctor, and passed out again.

Two hours later, Ron Hicks supervisor walked over to him. "Ron, you've got a telephone call. They've found Jenni, she's in the hospital, and it's not good. Take the rest of the day off, and let me know if you can come in tomorrow. God Bless you, and take care."

"Thanks Rudy. I'll let you know as soon as I can. Any idea where my mother is?"

"She's in the hospital too - they had to sedate her."

"Oh my God, what happened to Jenni?"

"Do you want a lift to the Hospital?"

"Thanks anyway Rudy, I might need the truck for something. Listen, if Nichole calls looking for me, tell her I'm at University Hospital, and I'll be home as soon as I can."

Ron drove as quickly as he safely could to University Hospital. He knew if Jenni was there, it was bad, since they were the major trauma center for Newark, and only accepted the worst Trauma cases since they had so many trauma cases per day in Newark. Finally he arrived in the parking lot, paid the parking fee for overnight, and jogged to the main entrance. He asked for Jenni Hicks, then remembered her name was Jennifer, and the lady at admitting asked for some ID. Once she confirmed his ID, she pressed the intercom button. "Dr. Miller, to Admitting, Dr. Miller to Admitting." 5 minutes later, a haggard middle-aged man showed up, and whispered to

the admitting clerk.

“You’re Ron Hicks?”

“Yes Doctor, what can you tell me about Jenni?”

“Let’s go in my office.”

Ron followed the doctor like a man walking down Death Row. When the doctor opened his door, he asked Ron if he’d like a cup of coffee.

“No thanks Doc, can you please tell me what happened to Jenni?”

Doctor Miller closed the door, locked it, then sat down and told him.

“Someone almost beat her to death. She’s got numerous broken bones, and they destroyed her face. We had to repair her kidneys and liver, and we removed her spleen since it was too badly ruptured to fix. On top of all that, there’s evidence of gang rape and torture including numerous burn marks all over her body.”

“Oh my God NO!”

“Mr. Hicks, she’s alive now, and we’ll try to keep her that way - but she needs the will to live. If you can’t convince her it’s worth trying to live, she’ll die here. I’m amazed she’s lasted this long after what happened to her. The paramedics recorded her body temperature at a near-hypothermic 90 degrees, meaning she had been laying on the asphalt for a while after she was dumped before she was found. By all rights, she should be dead now, but she seems to have a strong will to live. We can fix the physical damage, but you’re going to have to help her with the mental and psychological trauma she suffered, which is usually worse in these cases. I’ve reported everything I know to the police, and they took the test results as evidence.”

“Anyone locate my Dad yet?”

“They’re trying to get word through the Red Cross as I speak.”

“I hope Dad can make it home - if anyone can give her the will to live, it will be him!”

2 days later, Tom Hicks was reviewing the plans for another Sniper mission when a Hummer drove up to him, and a Sergeant wearing an MP armband jumped out. “Sergeant Hicks?”

“Yes Sergeant.”

“Please get in this vehicle - no questions please.”

Tom was used to security, so he handed the paperwork off to his 2nd in command, and jumped in the Hummer, which drove off to the General’s bunker.

“This way Sergeant.”

General Watson, the CO of the Ranger group they were attached to, looked up when Tom entered the room, said something to his aide, and the room cleared except for the two of them. “Tom, I’ve got bad news. Jenni’s in ICU at University Hospital in Newark, I’ve got your compassionate leave paperwork all filled out, and there’s a chopper waiting to take you to a plane going stateside. Leave everything here, and I’ll have someone take care of it.”

Tom was stunned. He never imagined anything could happen to his family, safe at home. He snapped out of his reverie when the General said “Tom, the chopper’s waiting, and they’re holding the plane. Don’t worry about anything but your family. Let me know if you need to extend that leave. Go with God!” Tom saluted the General then turned and jogged to the Blackhawk that already had its rotors turning. He ducked, and climbed aboard. As soon as he was belted in, the chopper rose and nosed over to get to the airport as quickly as possible. As soon as they landed, the Crew Chief directed him to a VC-11a that was sitting on the tarmac with its turbines idling. Obviously someone wanted to get his Stateside ASAP, since the VC-11a was the fastest VIP transport available, but it had half the legs of the VC-20. As soon as he was aboard, the engines spooled up, and the plane took off. They had to make several stops for fuel, but later that day, they were landing at Rhamstein AFB, where he transferred to a MAC shuttle flight to Langley AFB, and transferred to another Blackhawk from Langley that landed on the helipad at University. When he got off, the Trauma Resident guided him to his daughter’s room in ICU after he had changed into scrubs, and was gowned gloved, and masked. When Tom saw his daughter’s beaten and battered body covered with bandages and plaster, along with numerous tubes sticking out of her, he almost broke down and wept. Then he remembered that the Doc needed him to give her the strength to live. From somewhere deep within himself, he called up the strength, and he walked up to her, and said “Hi Angel, it’s Daddy!”

She turned her head toward his voice, but couldn’t talk due to the tubes in her throat. Tom swallowed and said “everything’s going to be OK, I’m here.” He stepped closer to her bedside, and held her hand. Even though it was bandaged, she held on tightly until the pain meds took effect again and she passed out. When he came out of ICU, Ron and Dr. Miller were waiting for him. Ron took two steps to his dad, threw his arms around him, and burst out crying. Once they regained their composure, Dr. Miller took them to an available room, and told Tom the whole story as best as he could. Tom went from a distraught father of an accident victim, to an angry father, and then to a murderous rage when he realized what had happened to his daughter. He didn’t let on to the Doctor or Ron, but whoever did this to his little girl would die, and

hopefully die painfully! The US Army had spent the last 20 years teaching him how to kill people, and now he was going to put that training to it's fullest use. He was going to wipe out all the dirtbags in Newark starting at the bottom, and working his way up. Later they were let into Lisa's room, and had a tearful reunion. With her husband there, the doctor felt it was safe to release her, so he processed the discharge papers. He told Tom to keep her out of Jenni's room until she looked better, or Lisa would probably go into hysterics again. They left the hospital in Ron's truck and drove home.

The next day, Tom sought out his High School buddy, Captain Steve Legarse of the Newark PD.

"Tom, I'm so sorry about Jenni. Is there anything I can do?"

"Steve, I need everything you've got on the case."

Steve knew Tom's background and what he did for a living, guessed what he was planning, and secretly approved. He was sick and tired of the revolving door "Justice" system. He knew personally of dozens of criminals who were guilty of the crimes they were charged with, and had even confessed, yet were released on a "technicality" that some shyster defense lawyer dreamed up. He had a long list of targets for Tom to go after, and gave him a copy of the complete case file on Jenni's abduction and brutal beating. Tom told Steve it might take a while, but if he suddenly heard about a bunch of dirtbags getting hit, he was probably behind it. Steve gave his best friend one last piece of news that made Tom furious. "Tom, the Chief has ordered me to close the investigation. It seems that City Hall doesn't want to rock the boat right now with a bunch of developers making offers to build skyscrapers in downtown Newark. It will mean millions of tax dollars to the city. If they went public, the developers will go elsewhere. They've been covering this up for years, and if I weren't due to retire in 2 years, I would have quit!"

Tom shook his buddy's hand, and said "I might have to disappear for a while, so If you hear of my death, remember Mark Twain's famous quote. Take care and see you later."

Tom walked back to his car, and drove home to analyze the documents Steve had given him.

Chapter 2 - Preparations

Over the next couple of weeks Tom read the huge file that Steve gave him, and took extensive notes, and visited his daughter in the evenings. Lisa and Ron went back to work. Tom remembered he was still on leave, and contacted his CO, requesting either an extended leave of absence or separation from the service for compassionate reasons. His CO was unwilling to let him quit, so he granted a 2-year leave of absence. Tom knew that he'd either be dead, in prison, or in hiding in 2 years, so he didn't worry about it. He contacted a couple of people he could trust, and they advised him to move to Nevada and establish residency, since it was easiest to get the weapons he'd need for the mission legally in NV. He did some internet research and realized that if he lived anywhere outside of Clark County, getting Class III weapons was as easy as filling out the paperwork. Once he had finished his research, the 3 of them gathered together one night after dinner to discuss Tom's plans.

After the meeting, he had a plan of action, but it meant leaving his wife, son and daughter for 6 months, and maybe permanently if he got caught. Ron knew his dad, and guessed what he had in mind. "Dad, please let me help. You'll be much safer with me watching your back. I want to kill the SOB's who did this to Jenni so bad I can taste it."

Realizing that his family knew what he wanted to do and approved changed his plans. He talked to Lisa in bed that night, and she said that Jenni was going to be in the hospital for at least the next 6-12 months, and she 'd feel safer living with her brother Tony than living alone in the house. She turned Tom so he was facing her, and her eyes blazed. "Tom, I know some of the stuff you've done in the Army - I want you to use that training to kill the people responsible for what happened to Jenni!"

"Lisa, Ron wants to help. I don't know if I can risk his life like that."

"Tom, if you don't take him with you, he'll just freelance and probably get himself killed in the process. If he's with you, at least you'll have a plan and a chance of surviving all this."

"I'm going to have to go away for a while, possibly forever if I get caught."

"Don't worry about me Tom, just get the SOBs who did this to Jenni!"

Tom told Lisa about all the money he had stashed over the years, and his GI insurance. He told her once he was gone to file a missing person's report, and claim the insurance. Since he was SOG, and gone for 6 months at a time, there wouldn't be anything unusual for investigators to key on. That gave him an idea. He could use one of his "legends" to buy all the weapons he'd need in Nevada, and tap a secret account for the funds. He'd heard of a couple of gunsmiths in Reno who could do the work, and knew how to keep their mouths shut.

The next morning, Tom talked to Ron, and told him if he wanted in, he'd have to quit his job in Newark, and leave without telling anyone where he was going, including his girlfriend. Ron admitted they weren't that serious anyway, she was just good in bed and it beat paying for it. Realizing what he said, Ron blushed and choked back tears.

Tom held him and said "That's OK, son, you didn't have anything to do with the people who tried to kill your sister. I've paid for it once or twice before when I was overseas before Lisa and I were married."

He discussed his plans with his son, who said he should be able to easily get a job in Reno, since it could take 6 months to get the class III hardware they were going to need for this job, besides his dad needed to teach him how to shoot long distance if he wanted a backup. Tom thought about that, and if he could teach Ron to shoot really well, they would make a sniper team, and snipers never worked alone unless they had to. Tom told Ron he knew of a 600-yard range right outside Reno where they could practice when they weren't working. Tom knew which legend he'd use. He had one that would work perfectly in Reno since they were building several casinos. "Ron, when we go to Reno, we'll be deep undercover, and I'll be using a legend. You can't call me Dad anymore, or you'll blow our cover. My legend's name is Roy Heinz, and I'm a construction laborer. We'll be roommates, and you'll have to call me Roy all the time, do you think you can do that?"

"Sure Roy, when do we leave?"

"Tomorrow afternoon. I wanted 1 last look at Jenni in case we don't come back."

"What do you mean, of course we'll come back!"

"Ron, there's an ancient Chinese Proverb - If Revenge is your goal, first dig 2 graves."

"Ok, I've got 6 months to get up to speed. If it means I die in the process, I just hope we get the SOB's who hurt Jenni first!" Tom held his son and cried.

The next morning, they packed, and Lisa moved in with her brother, telling him that Tom was going back out on a mission, and might not be home for a while, and she felt safer living with Tony and his wife. Tony was a typical big brother, and immediately wanted to protect his little sister, so he said "Ok" without hesitating. Meanwhile Tom tapped one of his accounts, and bought a nondescript sedan for cash and loaded their baggage and some stuff that he didn't want Ron to know about in case they got caught. Ron drove over to his apartment and packed while Nichole was at work. He wrote a simple goodbye note without giving her any hints where he was going, and told her the rent was paid through the end of the month, and she was free to stay there or find another place to live. He thought he'd miss her, then remembered how they met. She was a pretty waitress with a reputation of being easy at a sleazy unlicensed neighborhood

bar that construction workers hung out at since they didn't care how old you were, just the color of your money. Ron took her home one night, and realized the guys were right, she was dynamite in bed, and decided to let her live there with him. He didn't have to worry about getting steady sex when he found out she insisted on having sex every night. He did have to worry about falling off buildings due to exhaustion though! He packed his bags and personal belongings in case the police were to check up on him, it would appear he moved out permanently. Lisa knew that no one outside the family knew that Tony was her brother since they had different last names (he was her half-brother with the same mother) so she knew she would be safe with him and his wife. Tom had taught her how to spot a tail, and she used the techniques frequently just in case. She ran her tail-evasion techniques on the way to Tony's and was sure she wasn't followed.

The next day, Ron and Tom showed up at the Hospital in separate vehicles, said goodbye to Jenni, who was mercifully still unconscious, and left Ron's pickup in the parking lot with the keys in it. They transferred everything Ron would need for 6 months to the back seat of the Ford sedan, and they headed west. They drove pretty much straight through, and paid cash for their gas, and the one night at a truck stop motel when they were too tired to drive any further. They checked in separately into separate rooms to keep their covers intact.

Two days later, they arrived in Reno, and Tom rented a 2-room apartment in a decent part of town with good security, since he didn't want anyone to see what he was going to accumulate while he was there. The first thing he did after signing a 6-month lease was to change the lock on the deadbolt and install a security system. He opened a PO Box using a false address, and got a Nevada Driver's license using his legend under Roy Heinz with a false birth certificate and Ohio driver's license with the PO box listed on the driver's license.

Next he had to locate the gunsmith his friend had recommended. He found him in a small shop, and Tom guessed that he did mostly custom work, since he didn't have much inventory. He walked back into the shop with him, and explained what he wanted, but gave the gunsmith the impression that it was for an overseas mission, and showed him a false ID that indicated he was a government agent. That was enough for the gunsmith, who made a lot of weapons for guys with the last name of Smith, who just happened to be plumbers. He was a licensed Class II manufacturer, and the only thing he'd need to sell him the weapons he requested was cash in advance, and the paperwork and tax stamps, which could take 6 months to get.

They discussed the mission, and he suggested a Remington 700 in .308 with an integral suppressor and a MacMillan fully adjustable stock with a built-in monopod and bipod. He'd free-float and cryogenically treat the barrel, and mount and boresight a Swarovski 6x24x50 AO scope with a BCD turret and a lighted reticle. Tom asked him to include a 3rd Gen US Manufacture Night Vision scope with that. At the same time, he asked for a .308 semiauto suppressed sniper rifle, and the gunsmith suggested the AR-10T action with an integral suppressor and a flat top with the same scope. Tom knew that this gunsmith knew his rifles,

and agreed. Tom asked him if he could build a couple of hush puppies on Ruger 22/45 actions with integral suppressors and a slide lock. He nodded knowingly, and suggested Eley LR subsonic hollow points which were almost as quiet as a pellet rifle, yet still carried almost 100 ft-lbs out to 100 yards, making an excellent guard dog pistol. Tom snapped his fingers, and said “That reminds me, I need 2 break-down 22 rifles, but target accurate and fully suppressed.”

“I can do that too, but it will cost you. Would you prefer semiauto or bolt action?”

“Bolt action please - I want these to be as quiet as possible. How soon can you have everything ready, and how much is this going to cost?”

Let’s see, Remington 700 with suppressor, MacMillan stock, and Swarovski scope, say \$10 grand cash. AR-10T with the same setup, another \$10 grand. 2 3rd Gen NV Scopes, \$10 grand each. 2 hush puppies, say \$5 grand each. Would you like some Night vision goggles while I’m at it?”

“Sure if the price is reasonable.”

“I can get you the latest and greatest with 6 spare batteries for \$5 grand each.”

“I’ll throw in a case of Eley LR Subsonic hollow points for \$2 grand, make it an even \$80 grand, and I’ll take care of the paperwork.”

Tom knew he was shamelessly overcharging for the paperwork, but it would be worth avoiding the hassle, and having too many people know his legend. Tom opened a briefcase and handed him 4 \$20,000 stacks of 100 dollar bills. “There’s the 80 thousand. How do I contact you to find out the package is ready?”

I don’t want you in the shop until it’s ready to pick up for both our sakes, so if you have a number I can call from a pay phone, that would be the best.”

Tom recited a number from memory, it was a dead end message drop number answered by a little old lady who didn’t know who or what she was working for. The gunsmith wrote the number on the order, and Tom almost had puppies. “That’s bad Opsec to write any number down.”

“Relax, the paperwork goes into a safe for insurance purposes, and no one knows about it but me and a lawyer who’s paid to keep his mouth shut and watch out for my health. Sometimes these plumbers can be nasty people.”

“Don’t worry, I get the merchandise on time, and in perfect working order without any tails or other complications, and you’ll never have even a sniffle. Cappisce?”

Tom thought the Mafia Tough Guy talk was a nice touch, and give Mr. Gunsmith the wrong impression in case the gumshoes decided to sweat his ID out of him.

The gunsmith stuck out his hand, and said, “Nice doing business with you Mr. Smith.” Tom turned to leave, but made sure he checked the shop and the area around it before he stepped out into the clear. No one was around, so he hurried out to his car and drove away. 5 blocks away, he pulled into a shopping mall, swapped his plates and tossed the old ones in the dumpster. When he got home, he locked the door and took a tweezers and a bottle of Nail Polish Remover in the bathroom and removed the fake fingerprints he was wearing in case Mr. Gunsmith surreptitiously got his finger prints. Next he removed the fake mustache and facial appliances that changed his appearance, and put them back in his E&E kit. 10 minutes later, Ron drove up in a beat-up pickup truck that Tom told him to buy and register in his real name, and said “Good news Roy, I got us a job working at the Nugget for the next 6 months through the union.”

Tom knew a job was essential to their cover, so he told Ron “Good job, Ron. Want a beer?” Even though his son was underage, he drank all the time at the various unlicensed bars in Newark, like the one he met his ex-girlfriend in, so Tom didn’t even think about him drinking at home as long as he didn’t get drunk. He explained when they left that he’d have to stay sober for the next 6 months, because if the Feds or local cops caught on to them, they’d have to make a run for it at a moments notice, or get into a shootout that they probably couldn’t win. Tom decided now was as good of a time as any to start Ron’s training. “Ok, if the feds busted in right now, what would you do?”

“Where are they, and how are they entering?”

“All out front, front door, battering ram - SWAT tactics.”

OK, if I’m dressed, I bail out through window and shoot anyone I see!”

“Nice try, while you’re recovering from the fall, they’ll shoot you first if they see a gun. What I just described is a No-Win scenario, either you’re dead in a shootout, or doing 20 years minimum in Prison, possibly with a cellmate that rapes you every night.”

“Ouch - I think I’ll take door #1.”

“That’s why maintaining our cover is so important. If we accidentally blow our cover, the cops will be on us like white on rice. You can’t go back to see anyone you knew before you left, and if you get spotted in Newark by anyone you know, that could blow our cover too. We’ll have to be really careful, and conduct all our missions at night using suppressed weapons. We’ll have to buy enough food to last a while, and stay indoors under cover during daylight, and be very careful where we go at night. I’ve got 6 months to teach you everything I know, so pay attention since both our lives are at stake.”

Tom made dinner, then they went to bed, they had a long day ahead of them tomorrow.

The next morning, they loaded their gear belts and hard hats, and drove over to construction site at the Nugget. Ron showed his Carpenters Union ID, and Tom showed his Union ID in his Roy legend name, and the union rep had them fill out and sign some paperwork, then told them to get with their supervisor, and get to work. They put in a long hard day, and at the end of the 10-hour shift, they drove home in Ron's truck. Ron sat on the sofa drinking a Bud light while Tom made dinner. Once they ate, they both hit the shower and went to bed early. By the time Friday rolled around, Tom was grateful for a day off, and Ron volunteered for some overtime, so Tom decided he needed to go shopping, and stopped at another gun shop in Reno to buy some more guns, and some ammo to practice with. Since Ron wasn't experienced with pistols, he bought 2 Glock model 21 pistols in .45 acp which included 2 13-rd mags and a cable lock, 4 spare 13-rd mags, and 2 Bladeteck IWB holsters with 6 matching single-mag carriers. The instant check flew right through, and he used his "legend" credit card to pay for everything including 1,000 rounds of 230gr FMJ ammo and 200 rounds of Cor-bon 200gr Flying Ashcan JHP ammo.

He wanted them to carry 3 spare mags each, which would give them plenty of ammo for the defensive use he was buying the Glocks for. The suppressed weapons were their offensive weapons, and the Glocks would be their second to last ditch weapons. Thinking about that, he looked into the case, and he had two Benchmade AFCK Axis knives in black with the thumb hole opener for \$120 each, and 2 Spyderco Native III knives for \$50 each. Looking further down, he spotted a couple of Kabars, and then he saw 2 Ontario RAT 7 knives in D2 with a kydex sheath. He always wanted 1 so he bought 2 of the RAT 7's, and 2 Spyderco Natives, since he didn't need 2 "big" knives. He put those on a separate charge slip then asked the proprietor if he knew where someone could buy new tactical gear in Reno, and he told him of 2 places. Tom thanked him, and handed him a \$10 for his trouble and carried the loot out to the car in 2 trips. He went home and stashed everything after loading the Glock, cycling the action, topping off the mag, then sticking it into one of the IWB holsters. Next he loaded 3 more mags and stuck them in the magazine carriers, then slipped the IWB holster between his pants and underwear behind his right kidney, and stuck the 3 spare mags behind his left kidney. He felt better now that he was armed.

Later that afternoon, Tom checked out the "cop shop" that the gun store owner had suggested. He was amazed that they could sell bullet-resistant Level IIa vests to civilians, but he didn't argue with the man, and bought 2 of them, as well as 2 Blackhawk Industries LBVs with the removable ID patch - Tom knew where he could take care of that if they needed to impersonate Police, or even FBI or ATF agents. Since only Ron's weapon had detachable mags, the raid vests were overkill, but could come in handy in certain scenarios. He did buy a good drag back for the Remington 700 and the AR-10T, as well as 2 daybags and 2 E&E bags that fit onto pistol belts. He bought the canteens and the rest of the gear there. The proprietor looked at him kind of funny, but he got a Walter Middy type in there every now and then, and Roy fit the profile. Middle Aged White Man having a second childhood. Looking outside he confirmed

his suspicions when he saw the POS car he was driving. “Roy’s” credit card cleared, and that was all the shop owner really was worried about. Tom didn’t give a RA what the owner thought, but was mildly amused that if the owner knew what he was up to, he’d have kittens!

Tom drove home carefully, obeying the speed laws because he’d have a hard time explaining the gear in the back of his car plus the fact that he was illegally carrying concealed. By the time he got home, Ron was home drinking a Bud light lying on the couch with his feet up on the coffee table. Later that evening, Tom explained that Ron didn’t have to work overtime, and once the rifles were in, he wouldn’t be able to. Ron’s blank stare told Tom that more explanation was in order.

“As a SOG sniper, I have access to a multi-million dollar slush fund of untraceable money. It has to be untraceable, or the US Government wouldn’t have plausible deniability if a dirtbag suddenly died from a 7.62 headache. Even the US government can’t track the funds to prevent a politically motivated witch hunt by the opposition party. Over the years, I’ve been “Sheep Dipped” more than once to the CIA for an overseas hit contract.”

“How many guys have you killed?”

“At last count, right around 30.”

Ron was amazed that his mild-mannered Dad was a Government Assassin. Tom had seen the look before, and said “Get over it - if I looked like Arnold Swartzenegger, I’d be useless in the field. I have to look like Mr. Average to be able to do my job, so don’t act so surprised.”

“Remind me never to get you mad at me!”

Tom laughed and walked to the refrigerator to get a beer and sit down and just talk with his son for a while - they might never have a chance to do that again.

Chapter 3 - In Training

The next morning, Tom called around, and located a sporting goods store that sold Paintball products. They drove over there, and purchased 2 Brass Eagle Stealth Talon Ghost Paintball Guns including black facemasks, loaded tubes of 68-caliber paint balls, CO2 cartridges and other miscellaneous supplies. The total was right around \$200. Ron asked Tom why he was spending \$200 on paintball supplies. Tom said it was the only way to train him how to shoot a live moving target without shooting each other with real bullets. The pump action would make him slow down, and make each shot count. He bought some Surefire flashlights and other stuff including black sweats and knit watch caps, and black tennis shoes. Tom said that they'd practice sneaking around at night around the complex shooting each other with paintballs. It would be good practice on being sneaky, since if anyone called the cops, it would be tough explaining why 2 grown men dressed in black were shooting each other at Midnight with paintballs around an apartment complex.

With that out of the way, they went home, grabbed Ron's Glock, his spare magazines, and the practice ammo and headed to the indoor range in Sparks to learn how to shoot the Glock. After talking to the Rangemaster/owner, they rented 1 lane on the far side of the range, and he handed them 2 sets of eye protection and ear muffs. Tom asked if they had a classroom he could borrow for an hour. Tom laid a \$20 on the counter, and suddenly the classroom was available. Tom and Ron went inside and closed the door. Tom felt that giving Ron the "new shooter lecture" would be easier in here, then in the noisy shooting range. He showed Ron how to field strip the Glock and explained all the parts, and told him that the Glock was striker fired, so he only got 1 pull of the trigger per cycle of the slide, so if he got a failure to fire, he needed to cycle the slide and dump the round instead of trying to get it to fire. He showed Ron how to operate the gun, making sure there were no loaded magazines anywhere nearby.

Finally they were ready to go out on the range, and the owner handed him the magazines and targets, then they went out to the range, which was a very noisy area. Tom told him before he fired any live ammo, he wanted Ron to run a B-27 target out to the 7-yard line, and cycle the action of the Glock without a magazine in the gun, and point the gun at the center of the target, and squeeze the trigger 10 times in a row without a dime falling off the top of the slide. After about 30 tries, Ron went 10/10, so Tom handed him a loaded mag, and told him to put all 13 rounds in the 5x zone in the center of mass of the target. Tom told him to do it just like he did the drill, except this time, there was going to be some noise, and a bullet going downrange. His first attempt wasn't too bad, with all the rounds in the black, and 5-13 in the 5x zone. Tom handed him another loaded mag, and told him to try it again, except this time, concentrate on keeping the sights inside the 5x, and only squeezing the trigger when the sights were right in the center of the 5x. He did much better this time, going 10-13. For his next mag, Tom ran the target back from the 7-yard line to the 15-yard line and told him to do it again. By the end of the 2-hours they had bought, Ron was hitting 10-13 in the 5x zone at 15 yards.

Tom told him they needed to knock it off for today, but every weekend until the rifles showed up they were going to come to the range, and slowly increase the difficulty of the tasks. Next week, he'd have Ron try it at 25 yards, then move him back in and shoot double taps, and eventually firing Failure to Stop Drills, which was the way he wanted Ron to shoot from then on, since even a .45 shooting JHP ammo was a notoriously poor fight stopper compared to a rifle. Tom thought about that, and on the way home, stopped at a Sporting Goods store and bought a Mossberg 590 12 gauge shotgun, and 3 boxes of Federal Tactical 00 Buckshot. When they got out to the car, Ron asked him what the heck that was for. Tom told him that a shotgun was the best defensive arm for indoors, especially inside an apartment. He stopped and went back inside the store and bought 1 box of 25 rounds of #8 birdshot when he remembered that 00 buck would go right through his wall, and kill an innocent bystander in the next apartment, or the one past it.

He stopped at another gun store on the way home, and bought a 6-shot Sidesaddle and a 25-round bandoleer, and a box of 5 Federal 1oz Tactical slugs. Once he got home, he installed the side saddle, loaded 5 rounds of 00 buck and 1 round of slug in the Sidesaddle, then loaded the shotgun's magazine full of Birdshot minus 1 round. He explained that if you left 1 round open in the tubular magazine, it was quicker to switch from birdshot to buckshot than if the magazine was full. He showed Ron how to load and unload the shotgun while it was pointed out the balcony door, which was the safest direction for it to be. Tom said he'd sleep with the shotgun next to his bed since he was almost always home at night.

That night after dinner, Tom told Ron to get into his black sweats, tennis shoes, and cap, then he took the paintball guns, and showed Ron how to operate it. Once it was pitch dark, they put on their masks, loaded the guns, and quietly walked out of the apartment into an adjacent field. He told Ron that the paintballs hurt when they hit you, and to never take off his mask unless they were together, and he called a time-out, since getting hit in the face could wreck your vision. He handed Ron a white handkerchief, and told him if he decided to surrender, to wave it, and it would be understood as a cease fire. With that out of the way, Tom told Ron "Lock and load. Take 20 paces, then prepare to meet your maker."

They both loaded their guns, then Tom started counting. By the time he got to 20, Ron was 40 yards away, and hidden in the grass. Tom went to ground, and started looking for Ron using his peripheral vision. He also cheated. He brought his Surefire P-3 and forgot to tell Ron to bring his - oops! He thought he'd go over Marcinko's rules of Spec War when they got home. Rule #1 - Cheat! He would have loved to bring his night vision goggles, but he left his back at base camp in Saudi Arabia. He thought he spotted movement off to his right, so he grabbed his flashlight and paintball pistol in a Harries technique, and briefly flashed the light where he thought Ron would be. He spotted a black object not more than 20 yards away, and centered the sight on the center of the object and squeezed the trigger. He was rewarded by a "Splat" and a moan as he nailed Ron in the ribcage with a round. He rolled to his right to keep Ron from

returning fire, and cocked the pistol again. By now Ron was feeling like Inspector Clouseau after having been ambushed by Cato, and wished he'd think of something devious to get his Dad back for his sore ribs. He felt on the ground for a rock, and crawled slowly forward to where his Dad was last time, then taking a firing grip on his gun, hurled the rock to his left, striking the pavement. His trick worked when his Dad briefly flashed the light to his left, and Ron shot his dad right in the chest - Payback's a Bitch! After an hour or two of this, Tom took his handkerchief out of his pocket, and stood up and waved it. Ron stood up, put the barrel plug in his pistol, and Ron did the same, then they walked back to the apartment. "Hey Roy, Fuscina is definitely your color!" Tom looked at Ron's ribs, and commented "Well, Yellow is definitely yours, how are those ribs feeling?"

"Much better since I nailed you back."

They went back home, threw the sweatshirt tops in the wash, and Ron handed Tom a beer, then they sat down on the couch.

"Roy, I'm not one to complain, but you were cheating."

"Remind me to have you read Dick Marcinko's Rules of SpecWar."

"Why's that?"

"Rule #1 is Cheat! You don't get paid for how you kill the SOB, just as long as he's dead. By the way that was a neat trick, tossing that rock to get me to flash my light."

"Yeah, some secret agent you are - you fell for the oldest trick in the book!"

"Well at least I got you first!"

"How DID you see me?"

"If you use your peripheral vision, you can see better at night. Don't look straight at something, look out of the corner of your eye. Don't fix on one spot, keep your eyes sweeping back and forth so you have a better chance of seeing something."

"I guess the next level of one-upmanship would be to use night vision goggles."

"That would make it too easy - they can almost turn night into day - or at least a green-tinted monochromatic day. However, I did order 2 sets for us, no sense us not taking advantage of them."

"So how much longer are we going to keep up this Cato-Clouseau thing?"

“I’ve got a lot to teach you, so get used to getting tagged!”

“Thanks Roy!”

“That reminds me - I need to teach you hand to hand combat and knife fighting.”

“Man I’m looking forward to this, can’t we just blow up the whole building with them in it?”

“I’d love to, but there might be some innocent bystanders in the building.”

“Guess we have to do it the hard way - 1 dirtbag at a time!”

“You sure you want to do this Ron, we could both wind up dead or in prison.”

“I can’t get the image of Jenni out of my mind. She was a beautiful girl and never hurt anyone. Why her?”

“Probably because she was so innocent. Prostitution has gotten much more specialized as the tastes of the perverts gets more perverted. According to Captain Legarse, Jenni wasn’t the first girl from a Catholic high school that’s been abducted in Newark. He thinks there’s a ring that is specializing in innocent virgins, and selling them to “collectors” or pimping them to high-dollar Johns.”

“Just thinking about it makes me sick - if we start this thing - let’s finish it! I don’t want any other girls to have to go through what Jenni went through. Doc Miller told me what happened, and I had a hard time not getting sick.”

“You realize that if we kill a bunch of pimps that others will replace them. It’s like taking care of he cockroaches, but leaving the rotten building.”

“Ok Roy, once we get the people who hurt Jenni, let’s really take out the trash. We’re cleaning out the slums, but the slum lords will just build new ones!”

“I’ve got an idea to do just that - but first let’s take care of the dirtbags that hurt Jenni.”

When they finished their beers, they went to bed - they had a lot to do, and little time.

The next morning, they drove over to the range, and Ron continued his lessons. Tom was impressed by his level of concentration, and was soon showing him the Failure to stop drill.

“Ron, the Failure to Stop drill will be the way you shoot a pistol from now on for defensive shooting. You’ve mastered the double-tap, now you need to add another element. Some of our

targets, and most of the opposition will be wearing vests, and the only way to stop someone that's not openly wearing a vest is the Failure To Stop. You put 2 rounds into the 5x ring in the center of the chest, then you give him a 3rd eye by putting the 3rd round in the other 5x ring over the target's forehead. If they're openly wearing a vest, don't waste shots hitting them in the vest, go straight for the head shot."

Ron loaded a magazine, and started slowly like his dad had taught him, and slowly picked up the speed. When he was performing the FTS fairly well out to 15 yards, Tom decided that they needed to teach him the draw from concealment, and combat or tactical reloading. He looked at the clock, and realized their time was almost up. Ron looked tired, so Tom pulled out his Glock, unloaded it and unloaded the mag, reloading with 14 rounds of practice ammo, then putting the gun back in it's holster. He told Ron to stand off to his right, and ran a target out to 25 yards. He never learned to shoot IPSC, so he didn't start from the Surrender position, but with his hands comfortably at his side. Suddenly he drew and fired in 1 motion, and Ron could see 3 bullet holes in the B-27 right where they belonged. Tom repeated the drill 5 times, then flipped a switch, and retrieved the target. Ron knew that all 14 rounds were in the 5x circles. Not only that, but his Dad was FAST! Ron guessed correctly that an undercover agent/sniper had to be fast to defend himself in case the mission was blown and he had to Escape and Evade, or shoot his way out of trouble. With that little demonstration over, Tom reloaded the magazine with defensive ammo, loaded the chamber and topped off the magazine, then stuck the gun back in his IWB holster. Since they already paid for the lane, they were on the way out, when Tom got an idea and asked the owner if he knew of any good Tae Kwon Do Dojos in the neighborhood. He recommended the Wheatley Tae Kwon Do Academy or Master Castillo's Tae Kwon Do. Both taught the hard or full-contact method of Tae Kwon Do. Tom thanked him and they went back to the apartment. He called Master Castillo's dojo first, and made an appointment to see him Monday evening after work.

By Monday evening, they were both exhausted, but Tom told Ron to shower and get dressed in clean jeans and tee shirt, and make sure he wore tennis shoes or something he could take off easily, since there were no shoes allowed on the mat. They arrived promptly at 8pm right after Master Castillo's last class let out. He let them into his office, and told him his name was Tony, and gave him a brief background. He was military trained, and received most of his training in Tae Kwon Do in Korea while he was stationed there after Vietnam. Tom knew that he was about the right age, since he looked to be about 60 years old, but in excellent health and shape. Tony asked him what he could do for them.

"Sensei, my friend and I desire private instruction. I have the equivalent of a black belt in Military training, and my young apprentice (slight chuckle) is a beginner. We don't have much time, but we do have ample funds."

"This is highly irregular, but I do have the time. Very well, here's a pair of uniforms, go into the changing room, and get dressed. I want to find out what you know, and how well

disciplined you are before I train you.”

They got up, and Tom surprised them both by bowing and saying “Thank You Sensei” in near perfect Korean. With that they got up and got dressed. Tom showed Ron how to tie the white belt properly, then they walked barefoot out to the mats. Tom warned Tony “My Military training is a free-style, so be aware that I might throw in some Ju-Jitsu or Aikido techniques as well.”

With that they faced each other and bowed, then Tom just stood there - no fancy poses or funny Oriental noises. Tony was taken aback, then shook his head and remembered Roy, if that was his real name, was military trained, and wouldn't take an orthodox stance. He moved in experimentally, and Tom easily deflected the attack. Tony broke contact, and decided to crank it up a couple of levels, and became a flurry of fists and feet, the equivalent of his Black Belt Test. Tom matched him blow for blow, and strike for strike, with neither one really landing a punch or kick. After about 5 minutes, Tony stepped back and bowed, waiting for Tom to do the same. Finally they sat down cross-legged on the mat.

“Ok Roy, I'll teach you, but I doubt your story, or the fact that Roy is even your name. My guess is you're Special Forces trained, and judging by your mastery of Korean, possibly Special Operations. I don't need to know what you're up to, or why you want me to train you. I hope you're not using my training to commit evil.”

“Sensei, I can't tell you my real name for security reasons, but Ron and I are on a mission to right a wrong, and I'm a little rusty, and Ron has no martial arts experience, unless you include watching Kung Fu movies. We've got about 6 months to learn, and an unlimited budget.”

“Ok, I'll do it. 3 nights a week at 8:00 after my last class for 1 hour per night. I'll charge you \$10,000.”

“Can you include knives and other weapons in that training?”

“If I'm happy with your progress, and I feel safe teaching you weapons techniques.”

“Very well. I accept.”

“Ron, what do you say about all this?”

“I'm eager to learn, and I hope it doesn't hurt too much.”

“Don't worry, we'll be wearing pads when we spar. I just wanted to know how advanced Roy was. He really doesn't need training, just practice. He's the equivalent of a 3rd Degree Black belt right now. He's pretty fast, but not as flexible as he needs to be. You, Ron, on the other

hand, are in for 6 months of getting your butt kicked as you learn. I don't have time to coddle you."

"Gee thanks, first I get shot with paintballs, now I'm getting my butt kicked. What next, swimming in boiling oil?"

Everyone laughed, and Tony called the "Class" to attention, and instructed Ron in some basic moves, which "Roy" duplicated perfectly, but Ron was having trouble with. Tony stopped, and put him in the correct position, and repeated it until Ron had it down perfectly, then they moved on to the next position. Soon their hour was up, and they both faced Tony and bowed. They got back into their street clothes and drove home.

When they got back, Tom gave Ron a huge pile of books to study, as well as some printouts, including Marcinko's 10 Commandments of SpecWar. Tom told Ron that his training was about to get intense, and he wouldn't have time to do anything but work, sleep and train, and he might cut into the sleep a little so he'd have time to read all the manuals he was giving him. Ron groaned and carried the pile back to his bedroom. Tom heard the shower start, and decided that Ron had decided to go to bed while he could.

Chapter 4 - Life's a Kick!

By the end of class Wednesday night, Ron was exhausted, and was glad that the Taekwondo class only met 3 nights a week. Tom told him that he would spend Thursday and Friday nights studying the books he gave him. The book he was supposed to read first, and the biggest, was the latest Marine Sniper training syllabus. Ron didn't bother to ask where he got it. The manual was really technical and detailed, so he kept notes. His dad quizzed him verbally as he finished sections. Tom hoped the rifles showed up soon so he could show Ron how to do what he was reading about. The part about Stalking made sense, and he was able to put it to immediate use the next time they met in the field, and he used some of the techniques to stay hidden so well that Tom gave up after an hour and waved his white handkerchief. He was stunned when Ron stood up no more than 20 yards dead ahead of him. He was glad that he didn't use his flashlight, because Ron would have nailed him! He was glad that his son was learning to be sneaky, problem was he was getting too sneaky!

On Saturday, then went shooting at the Range. Tom taught Ron how to draw from concealment, first with an unloaded gun, and finally with a loaded gun. He told Ron that he was going to teach him something that went totally against Firearms safety, but could gain him a fraction of a second with his draw, at the risk of shooting himself in the leg. He wanted Ron to put his trigger finger on the trigger as soon as the barrel was clear of the holster, and starting to point forward. He explained that most coaches taught the safer but slower method of leaving your finger off the trigger until the gun was pointed at the target, but the fraction of a second it took could mean the difference between life and death if you were facing someone armed with a full-auto AK or similar weapon, since they were trained to always have their trigger finger on the trigger, and could spray a burst in front of them from the hip with a good chance of hitting you.

By now, he was shooting at the 25-yard line, and doing a pretty credible FTS drill. Tom decided to accelerate his training with the paint ball guns, and varied the scenario from negotiating a parking lot without being seen or hit, to clearing a building with potentially armed adversaries. There were plenty of abandoned commercial buildings they could use for training, they'd just have to be careful and not get caught!

As the martial arts training progressed, Ron was catching on, and the stretching exercises made them both more limber, and their kicking and punching techniques got better. Finally Tony decided to have Ron and Roy pad up and spar. He told Roy to take it easy, and while Ron got his butt kicked, he got a couple of good shots in too. Tom realized that Ron's youth gave him the power and speed he had when he was 18 and fresh out of Special Forces training. He realized that eventually Ron would be stronger and faster than his old man, but he'd maintain an

edge by being crafty. He remembered the quote “Age and Treachery can overcome Youth and skill.” Ron was performing the basic moves well enough to gain Tony’s praise for his form. Now all he needed was to work on speed and power. He suggested lifting weights, and doing certain exercises to strengthen his leg muscles while maintaining flexibility. The next couple of weeks, Tom noticed that Ron was kicking and punching significantly harder, and told Tony. Tony picked up a full-size heavy pad to see for himself, and was glad that his balance was perfect, because Ron was really hitting hard. Tony decided to spar with Ron, and check his level of knowledge. When they finished, Tony told him that Ron could earn a black belt in another month or two of training. Tom just smiled. His son was becoming a “lean mean fighting machine!”

Tony decided that now would be a good time to introduce knives and staff work into their practice sessions. He had several padded Pugal sticks, and rubber training knives. With the Pugal sticks, he insisted that they wear headgear. For the first week or so, Tom beat Ron’s butt, but as Ron caught on, he surprised his Dad, and wound up winning over half their sparring sessions. From there, they graduated to a padded 6 ft staff made of Rattan with thinner padding, so getting hit hurt without causing permanent injury. Ron learned fast, and dumped Tom onto the mat when he swept the staff behind Tom’s knee quicker than he could react, and Tom hit the mat like a ton of bricks. When Tom woke up, Tony said “I think that’s it with the staff training, you guys are getting too dangerous to safely spar.” Next they learned the basics of knife fighting, except Tom cheated and used some techniques the Special Forces Instructor showed him, and dodged Ron’s initial thrust, and threw him to the mat while controlling his knife arm. Tony said “No fair Tom, I haven’t taught that technique yet!” Ron had a surprise for his Old Man, he had rented some knife training videos, and was going to surprise the hell out of him. When they resumed the “en garde” position, Ron lead with his right hand, then suddenly tossed the knife to his left hand, caught the blade, and used his right hand to grapple his dad, and put his knife to his throat before he got the surprise of his life when he was thrown head over heels, and landed with a thud on the mat in front of Tom.

“Nice Move Roy, for a second there, I thought he had you - let’s check your neck for chalk marks. Sorry, there’s a clear chalk line on your throat right above your Adam’s apple, I’m awarding this session to Ron.” Tom picked his son off the mat, and said “Nice move Ron, where’d you learn that one?”

“I rented some videos.”

“You guys play rough, how come you’re taking this so seriously.”

“I wish I could tell you Tony, but the less you know, the safer for you.”

“Ok Roy - I guess you’re right. I think whoever you guys are after better have his life insurance paid up.”

When they got home, Ron ran the shower longer than usual, and Tom realized that he'd probably thrown Ron harder than he had to. He'd remember to apologize tomorrow, he was too tired tonight.

Over the next couple of months, Ron got a crash training program based on everything his Dad could teach him from his Special Forces training, combined with what Tony could teach them. Ron and Tom's sparring sessions got more physical, and Tony was glad they were wearing pads, or they would have hurt each other. Finally Tom got a cryptic message on his dead-drop that his package was ready for pick-up. Tom drove to the gun shop the next morning, and the gunsmith had outdone himself. All the barrels were made from Stainless Steel, and the entire gun was Titanium Nitride coated inside and out, which he knew was very expensive, but superior to a hard chrome, and flat black and non-reflective. He showed Tom the sighting targets of all the weapons, and suggested using Black Hills 175 grain Match Hollow Point ammunition. While the round was supersonic, the suppressor would eliminate all firing noises except the supersonic crack, which would be 90 degrees off the actual shooter's bearing to the target. The semiauto AR-10T was slightly noisier due to the semiauto action, but had a 20 round magazine and a much higher rate of fire. They both sported the same Swarovski 6x24x60 scope, and he had not only boresighted them, but zeroed the rifles to 100 yards using a Ransom Rest. If he used the Black Hills Match ammo, he could guarantee minute of angle groups out to 600 yards from either rifle.

The .22 hush puppies were based on the Ruger 22/45, but he incorporated a slide lock, and nitrated the entire pistol flat black. The integral suppressor looked exactly like the stock bull barrel except it had a ring of holes surrounding the muzzle to let the gas escape. The break-down rifles, and his Remington 700 only had 1 hole where the muzzle was, so he knew that the gunsmith had designed those suppressors to vent the gas back into the barrel after the bullet had cleared the barrel. The Semiauto guns had to have multiple gas ports to allow them to fire semiauto, making them slightly louder. He showed Tom his dB figures, and with the Eley subsonic ammunition, none of the .22 rifles exceeded 80 decibels. With the slide locked, the hush puppies peaked at 70 dB and the turn-bolt 22 break-down rifles peaked at 65 dB when fired wet. The loudest gun was the AR-10T and its first round dry dB level was still under 100dB, which would be almost inaudible at 50 yards.

Tom was impressed by the ingenuity of the gunsmith. He had taken a nice synthetic buttstock, and hollowed it out to hold the suppressed barrel, receiver, 2 10-rd magazines, and a box of Eley subsonic hollow points. The barrel threaded onto the receiver using interrupted threads, and when it was fully snug, there was only a tiny gap between the receiver and the barrel/suppressor. He was expecting a wire frame buttstock, but this was superior, and until assembled, looked like a stock AR-7. Instead of a bolt handle, there was a knurled nut that when twisted 90 degrees released the bolt, which came back under spring tension. Closing the bolt and turning the nut cocked the hammer. The safety was a simple trigger blocking pin, and was easy to clear with the trigger finger. He tested the trigger, and it broke like a glass rod at

right about 2 pounds of pressure. He told Tom that all the rifles triggers were set to 2 pounds since he assumed he was a professional shooter, and wanted the lightest crispest trigger possible. In the next box was the Night Vision equipment. The scopes had QD mounts, and the NVG's were the strap-on style, and there was 6 spare batteries for each. There was a case of the Eley .22lr subsonic hollow point ammo as well. He put the rifles in cases, and helped Tom carry them out to his car. Tom shook his hand, and the owner walked back inside his shop. Tom drove 2 blocks away, switched plates again, then drove home after performing 2 tail-detection runs. Unless they had a helicopter, no one was tailing him. Just to be sure, after his second run, he got out at a gas station and looked around. He couldn't see any helicopters, so he hoped he was clear. He filled up the tank then drove home.

He wondered where they were going to practice 600-yard shooting, when he overheard the pistol range owner telling a customer that the Washoe County Sheriff's Department owned a LEO-Only range in Sparks that had a 1,000-yard rifle range. He had a set of fake Federal LEO ID's that would work perfectly. That evening, he took Ron's picture with a Polaroid camera, and had him take Tom's picture. Working carefully, he inserted the picture into the fake Federal ID. It was such a good fake that it would show as a legitimate ID even after a thorough computer check. He told Ron what he was up to, and Ron laughed. "I'd love to see the looks on their faces when they figure out that the same guys who were taking out the trash in Newark were right under their noses for almost a month!" Tom knew that they could just go 50-100 miles east of Reno and shoot in the desert, but he didn't want any nosey BLM agents asking too many questions in case they had accidentally set up on BLM land. CIA/SOG had gone to great lengths to establish bona fide legends for their agents, which included the ability to impersonate Federal Law Enforcement officers when necessary. Tom told Ron that if he shut up and let him do all the talking, they wouldn't suspect anything, except that they might be CIA or some other alphabet agency. Their "Special Equipment" would tend to reinforce their misconceptions. Ron knew from experience that Friday was the best day to use the range, since most LEOS valued their weekends, and would try to get home on time Friday.

Tom had another idea that should clinch things for him. He had a series accounts and passwords that would give him a back-door access to the CIA's computer system which bypassed security. He could send an e-mail from the CIA's DDO to the Sheriff informing him that 2 undercover agents needed the use of their rifle range for 30 days, and no one in the Sheriff's department had need-to-know anything about them, and they weren't to be spoken to unless the agent started the conversation after they presented their ID's. Tom included the names on their ID's and their ID numbers, then sent the e-mail, and set up a router to re-route any e-mail regarding that e-mail to his personal Hot mail address.

Tom remembered he needed some 308 Match ammo, and called around. He found some Black Hills 175 grain Match Hollow Point ammo for \$15.99 for 20 rounds. He asked what the case price was if he bought two cases. The store owner said that he could knock 20% off that price if he bought 2 cases (2,000 rounds). He asked how many cases he had in stock. He checked and

he had 4 cases from the same lot of the 175gr. Match ammo. Tom said he'd be right over and buy all 4 cases. He drove up an hour later, and after tax, he bought 4 cases for \$2,752 on his credit card. The owner helped him load the car, and he drove home and waited until Ron was home to help him unload.

Friday morning came, and they packed up in Tom's sedan, which could pass for a Fedmobile, and drove to the range in Sparks. They presented their ID to the Rangemaster, who made a call, and 2 minutes later, said "Excuse me, gentlemen, everything is in order. I'll put you on lanes 11 and 12, and I'll tell everyone you wish to be left alone."

Tom looked at the Rangemaster, and his badge said Sergeant Lopez. "No problem Sergeant. We need to practice, and we don't want to disrupt your range. Is it OK if we keep coming on Friday morning?"

"Sure, it's pretty dead around here on Friday."

"Ok, we'll be shooting some special equipment, and we don't want any onlookers, so that should work out great. Could you give me 50 600-yard rifle targets?"

"I'm sorry sir, but they're only free to Washoe County law enforcement since it comes out of the Sheriff's budget, but I can sell you 50 of them for \$20."

Tom took a \$20 out of his pocket and handed it to the Rangemaster, got the targets, and drove out to lane #11, and set up targets on the 300-yard target board. He wanted to make sure Ron's rounds were on the paper until he got good enough to shoot MOA groups at 600 yards. They walked back and set up their shooting positions, then uncased their rifles. Both had a bipod/monopod setup per Tom's instructions, so he knew Ron could shoot decent groups fairly quickly. He reminded Ron to save ALL his brass, since he didn't want to leave any evidence around just in case. He set up 500 rounds next to Ron, and kept 500 rounds for himself, then they got set to shoot. Ron loaded up his 20-round magazines, and Tom loaded 5 rounds into his internal magazine. They put on their ear and eye protection, and Tom watched Ron get into his prone position, and was pleased that he had taken the instructions from the Marine Sniper Manual to heart. Once he was set, Ron dialed the BDC turret on his scope to the 300 yard setting, and fired a single round. It was well centered, but half an inch high, so he fired 5 more rounds to confirm his group. All 5 shots were in a 4-inch group, but centered 1 inch above the X-ring, so he dropped his 1/8-moa target turret down 3 clicks, which should be 1/8" greater than a 1" adjustment at 300 yards, and fired another 5-shot group, which was well-centered, but still over 4 inches in diameter. He wrote the setting down as a 300-yard Zero, and recorded the date, temperature, wind, and humidity values that they had written down from the Rangemaster's display. Just like a sniper, he was keeping a log book. He had fired rifles before when he was in the Army Jr. ROTC summer camp a couple of years ago, so he knew the basics. He decided that he didn't want to join the Army, he couldn't put up with the BS, but he liked shooting, and

was the second-best shooter with their target .22 rifles.

Tom was on the next lane over, firing slowly and methodically, writing everything down. When he was satisfied with a 3-inch 300 yard group, he waited until the Rangemaster signaled that it was ok to go down to change targets, pulled his targets, and set up several targets on the 600 yard target board. Next he put up some 600-yard targets for Ron, then they walked back to their shooting lanes and got ready for shooting to resume. Tom watched Ron's first couple of groups, and was pleased to see Ron's first round hit the x-ring, even if he was shooting an 8-inch group. He knew over the weeks, his groups would shrink. When they had both shot 500 rounds they put up the .308 rifles, assembled the .22 rifles, then set targets up on the 100-yard line. Ron was used to shooting with a peep sight, so he did pretty good, shooting groups no bigger than 2 inches with open sights. Tom noted that the receiver had been modified to take scope rings, so he decided to buy 2 Simmons 3x12x50 scopes with QD mounts, and see how accurate these little rifles could get. Obviously the scope couldn't fit inside the stock, but he'd think up something later.

When they were finished, they policed all the brass in their area that even resembled .22 or .308 brass and collected it in plastic shopping bags and put it in their trunk. They packed everything up, and Tom stopped at the Rangemaster's office. Sergeant Lopez was still there. "Thanks for letting us use your range. Ok if we come back about this time next Friday?"

"Sure, just go ahead and set up on lanes 11 and 12 unless you need something. I was watching you shoot on the 600-yard line, and you were doing really well."

"Thanks Sergeant. See you next week." Tom shook his hand, and got back in the car. He left Ron in the car with the motor running since it was warm enough to need the air conditioning. They stopped at a gun shop on the way home, bought 2 more cases of Black Hills Match ammo from the same lot number, 2 Simmons 3x12x50AO scopes with QD mounts, a laser boresighter with .22 and .308 arbors, 2 cleaning kits, 2 nice pairs of Wolf Ears and Gargoyle shooting glasses. When they got home, they stripped and cleaned every gun they fired, then lubricated and reassembled them.

Chapter 5 - Final Preparations

With his arsenal intact, Tom could start planning the final phase of their training, and mission planning. First they had to test-fire and shoot the hush puppies for accuracy. He called the range, and the owner said that he had no problems with people shooting suppressed pistols at the range, as long as they weren't full auto. Tom decided to risk it, because the range owner only knew him by his legend, which would cease to exist as soon as he left Nevada, and tapped the funds left in the account. The next Saturday, they drove to the range, and brought the cased pistols and the remaining 500 rounds of the Eley subsonic ammo. He had located a supply of the same lot number of Eley ammo, and had purchased 2 cases to be on the safe side. It should be delivered to the UPS depot in Reno within a week.

They rented 2 lanes for 2 hours, then put on their Wolf Ears since other shooters were using the range, and their Gargoyle shooting glasses. The gunsmith had provided 8 15-rd magazines with the pistols, and they were already loaded with the Eley subsonic .22lr rounds. Tom showed Ron how to operate the pistol, then they both ran a B-27 out to the 15-yard line. Tom told Ron to leave the slide unlocked for now, but showed him how to use the lock if he needed 1 super-quiet shot. Tom brought his gun up, and the Trijicon Night sights the gunsmith installed were easily visible, and when Tom touched the trigger, the first round went right through the center of the 5x zone. Tom shot 5 more shots, and the group could have been covered by a quarter. He ran it out to 25 yards, and it still shot quarter-sized groups from the standing position. He looked over, and Ron's pistol was shooting quarter-sized groups at 25 yards as well. Next they practiced the Failure to Stop drill. With the weight of the suppressor, the gun lifted more slowly, so the 2 shots to the chest covered a silver dollar, and he had to physically lift the barrel to make the head shot. Evidently Ron had figured that out too, because he had 2 rounds to the chest, and one right where it belonged in the forehead.

A couple of hours later, they had shot maybe 300 rounds, and cased the pistols back up before the range owner could get too good of a look at them. They got in Tom's car and drove back to the apartment, and thoroughly cleaned the pistols. Tom told Ron they needed to practice firing with the night vision scopes, and Ron admitted one of his buddies at work told him about a place in the desert where they went to shoot full auto, and no one bothered them. Ron told him that he turned his buddy down, but noted the location for future reference. Tom was glad that Ron was using his head, and hoped that they could use the area when it got dark to shoot their suppressed rifles with the Night Vision scopes mounted. He mounted the scopes on the rifles, boresighted them with the laser boresighter, and cased the rifles. He packed the boresighter so they could shoot the .22 rifles with the night vision scopes if they had time.

Monday night they were back at Tony's studio for more abuse. This time Tony had 2 humanoid training targets set up in the middle of the studio, and handed each of them a rubber Bowie style knife, and said they were going to learn to integrate their armed and unarmed techniques. Tom

thought this would be interesting and informative, since his Special Forces Instructors never taught them to use both systems at once, but he could see how it could be useful. Over the next hour, they practiced using their knives as well as their feet and elbows to attack the training dummies. Even loaded with water, the dummies moved, bobbing and weaving like a prizefighter, increasing the difficulty of landing blows just like a real fighter. Ron was practicing some interesting slashing techniques, since Tony had explained that slashing an artery killed your target quicker than stabbing them unless you nailed the heart. Since the heart was a fairly hard target to hit, especially when the other guy was doing everything in his power to prevent that, and might be wearing a vest, he taught them to attack the exposed veins and arteries with quick slashes. By the end of the hour, they were both breathing like tired thoroughbreds.

When they finished, Tony asked them what they had learned, and Tom said he was pleasantly surprised that a Bowie knife could work with Taekwondo techniques. Ron thought it was pretty neat that he could kick someone's butt, and cut them at the same time. Tony said the downside was someone could cut him back. Knife vs. Knife fighting usually guaranteed you'd get cut, and the person who won could still bleed to death if he didn't get medical help. Tom chimed in that was why he preferred pistols and rifles. Tony had to agree with that. They got changed, and went back to their apartment.

Tuesday night was more of the same, except this time Tony was showing them techniques and moves to use when you combined a knife with Taekwondo. They weren't as tired, but they were mentally fatigued. Wednesday night was the studio session from hell, because they spent the entire night sparring using the techniques they had learned. They both came home bruised and sore.

Tom decided Thursday night to drive out to the area that Ron suggested would be a good shooting area. They located the turn-off, then the secondary road heading out to the desert. 20 miles later they drove into a box canyon, and saw all the litter, and the abandoned and shot-up refrigerators, and figured this was the spot. The road was rough enough that Tom was glad they had taken Ron's truck. They set up some targets at 100, 300 and 600 yards, and spent the rest of the night shooting all their suppressed rifles. When he was finished, he had 1 last thing to do - he wanted Ron to learn to shoot the hush puppy while wearing night vision goggles, which reduced your field of view like you had 2 toilet paper tubes strapped to your face. Ron liked being able to see, but didn't like the lack of peripheral vision. After a couple of hours, he got used to it, and was able to move and shoot targets Ron would designate with an red-filtered flashlight. They packed it in after midnight, and drove back to the apartment. Tom decided to skip shooting at the rifle range today, and they got caught up on their sleep.

Friday, Friday night, and Saturday was spent teaching Ron how to navigate at night using compass, ranger cords to keep track of his steps, and his night vision gear. Tom marked some spots on the map, and Ron had to get there without being spotted. Tom forgot to tell him that

the route would be laced with trip wires and other surprises. After he tripped the first one, Ron was muttering something about “Curse you Cato!” but was watching carefully for any further surprises. He fully expected Tom to pounce out of a tree and attack him. It took all night, but Ron found the locations, and collected the doll parts Tom had hidden there. He made it back home around 3 am Saturday morning. Ron handed him the 6 doll parts, then told him he was going to bed. Tom almost made him stay up and train, but he could see Ron had reached his limit of endurance.

Saturday night, they went out and did it again as a team, and it went much faster, especially since Ron didn’t have to worry about his dad pouncing on him, because they took turns at point. Tom relocated them to the Commercial District, and explained that if they got caught here, they might be facing charges of Prowling, Attempted Burglary, and Trespassing, but it was the only way to learn how to sneak around commercial buildings like they had in Newark. Tom showed him how to put on black face paint, and then a black facemask, then black leather gloves. They spent the rest of the night skulking around several commercial buildings, then played hide and seek with some security guards. Ron was feeling the adrenalin rush, and thought it was fun. He was amazed at how dumb the security guards were, even when they deliberately alerted them by pitching a rock on the pavement. When they got back to the apartment, they took off the face paint, then had a beer laughing their heads off. When they finished, Tom told Ron when they did it again, it would be deadly serious, and if they got caught, they’d probably be killed if they were lucky, and if not, they could wind up looking like Jenni if someone decided to find out what they were up to.

Monday morning they were back at work, and Tom spent the whole day thinking about what he needed to teach Ron between now and when they started the mission. Finally he decided to tell Tony that they had 2 weeks maximum left before they had to leave for their mission. That evening Tom took Tony aside and told him. “Roy, you two are about as prepared as I can make you for your mission. All further sparring could accomplish would be to risk injury. With your permission, I’d like to administer the Black Belt test to Ron to make it official.”

“Ok, but does he really need to break a board. If he broke or injured his hands at this late date, it would ruin my mission timing, and the target is always moving.”

“Very Well Roy, I’ll just sign off, since I have NO intention of sparring with Ron - he’s dangerous.”

Tom reached into his pants pocket, and withdrew a bundle of 100 dollar bills. He handed it to Tony, and said it was the remainder of the \$10 Thousand he asked for when they started. He shook Tony’s hand, and they left the studio.

When they got home, Ron asked “What was that all about, I thought we were going to train

tonight?”

“Tony said that further sparring would just risk injury, then he wanted to administer your Black Belt test, but I vetoed that idea since you aren’t here to get a belt, but learn what you need to know to stay alive. Besides, if you injured yourself breaking a board, I might have to try it without you. We’re finished training, now we need to do some serious mission planning, then we have to move all this stuff back to Newark without attracting the wrong kind of attention.”

“How about if we rent a U-haul?”

“The car couldn’t pull it, and I don’t think the Pickup is in good enough shape to pull it, besides, I need the car for the mission.”

“Ok, we’ll rent a truck. We can bury the illegal stuff behind a bunch of boxes and thrift store furniture so it looks like someone who is packed to move.”

“Now you’re thinking Ron, we need to be as covert as possible. Speaking of which, since we’ve got the room, let’s go shopping at Costco while we’re in Reno, and buy enough food and supplies for 30 days, so we only have to go out at night when we’re hunting once we’re in New Jersey. The less we’re out during daylight once we’re in NJ, the better.”

The next day, they drove the pickup to the Costco store, got a membership in Tom’s legend, and spent the rest of the day shopping. They paid cash to avoid complications, and when they were finished, Tom was amazed at what Costco carried. They bought half a dozen huge coolers and dry ice so they could buy frozen meat, then they bought enough guy food and supplies to last almost 60 days just in case. Later that afternoon, they stopped at the U-haul office and bought a bunch of boxes, packing tape, and bubble wrap just to throw them off. While they were there, Ron asked the clerk what the one-way rental to New York City was for their medium-size truck with a 2-wheel dolly, since the car was a front-wheel drive. She was cute, and flirted with Ron, who flirted back, and she volunteered a whole bunch of useful information, as well as her phone number. When they got out, Ron showed Tom her phone number, and realizing it had been a while for Ron, and he might wind up dead in a week or two said “go ahead, just don’t bring her back to the apartment.” That night, Ron picked her up, and after a nice dinner, she suggested retiring to her place, where he made up for lost time, and left early that morning more tired than after his roughest workout at the studio, but with a huge grin on his face.

The next morning, Tom told Ron that they should quit work, finish their mission planning together, then pack and move back to Newark. Ron called, told the boss they both quit, and he’d be by that afternoon for his final check. They spent the rest of the day planning their mission. They were in no hurry, there was 2 weeks left on their 6-month lease. He told Ron that if anyone asked, to tell them that they had taken jobs working in Alaska for several times what they were getting. Tom let Ron read the Police report for the first time, and he was

furious, especially when Tom told him that the Police chief told his friend Steve Legarse not to pursue the case any further, and to close the case, and why he wanted the case closed. Ron clenched his fists, and felt right at that moment that if the Chief was in front of him, he'd have no problems killing him! Tom knew what he was doing, and told Ron that even if they killed all the pimps and pushers, new ones would replace them, as long as the City leadership was corrupt. He suggested something that he had found out on the Internet. He told Ron that the New Jersey Police Chiefs Association was holding a huge conference in the Garden State Convention Center in Somerset, NJ in a couple of months, and the Mayor and most of the City Council, and the Police Chiefs from neighboring ultra-liberal departments would be there. Sarah Bradley of HCI was supposed to be the keynote speaker, so he knew that they were up to further trashing the 2nd Amendment.

Tom told Ron he was planning on blowing the whole building sky-high with the corrupt politicians inside. Ron had absolutely no problems with that. Tom said that would give them a month to take out the trash in Newark, and still leave them time to set up, infiltrate, and wire the Convention Center to blow sky-high. Since he knew the date and time, he could use a timer activated bomb set to blow right when Sarah started her keynote speech, and everyone who was against citizens owning guns in law enforcement would probably be in the building, and as a bonus, they'd probably get the Mayor and City Council, who have done nothing to stop the crime wave gripping the city, and swept it under the rug for years.

Tom located the building plans on the internet, and located several vulnerable points that weren't easily accessed, and probably won't be searched too diligently. His legend as a construction worker would be a perfect cover for installing a bomb deep inside the building. Meanwhile Ron was studying all the maps he could locate of downtown Newark in the vicinity of where Steve thought Nicky's lair was. He took extensive notes, especially distances and elevations between buildings, and possible sniper nests with a commanding view of Nicky's realm. Friday they went to the rifle range for their final practice session, and Ron was finally shooting 6-inch or smaller groups using the bipod and monopod in the prone position. Tom had suggested 1 upgrade to Ron's rifles, a targeting visible/IR laser for each rifle. Tom boresighted them, then the test-fired both of them on their last day at the range. Tom and Ron calibrated the .22 rifle laser for 50 and 100 yards, and the .308 laser for 100, 300, and 600 yards, and scribed the case to indicate the settings for each range. Tom knew the laser would make up for Ron's lack of experience shooting at night or in poor conditions. Once they were finished, they left the range without saying goodbye. That afternoon, Ron picked up the U-haul truck and drove it back to the apartment, where they loaded their stuff, then boxes of food and clothing, and miscellaneous stuff. Finally they drove over to the Thrift store and bought a cheap sofa and chairs to fill up the bed. They drove back over to the apartment, loaded the car on the tow dolly, then dropped the keys off at the landlord's apartment. He was at work, so they didn't see him, so Tom left a note cancelling their lease 3 days early and returning the keys.

Chapter 6 - Relocation

Driving the big slow diesel truck back to Newark took almost a week at 55mph plus stops and overnight stays. Tom leased another apartment closer to where they were going to work for 6 months, then they unloaded the truck, and Ron turned it in at the New York depot. Tom followed behind to drive him back, since using public transportation between Newark and New York City was almost as big a risk as getting caught. When they got back to the apartment, Tom told Ron that was the last time they would be seen outside during daylight hours. After they had settled in and gotten a couple good nights sleep, Tom and Ron went over the schedule for the operation. Captain Legarse had given Tom a list of notorious pimps and pushers, and Tom thought that if he grabbed Spike, Nicky's lieutenant, and pumped him for information, then wacked a half-dozen pimps and pushers throughout Newark that Nicky wouldn't realize he was the target until it was too late. One night after Ron had gone to bed, Tom stayed up and made a few devices he needed for the upcoming jobs. The next night, he told Ron to stay home, he was going to do a solo surveillance of a sleazy strip joint that might card Ron and blow their cover. Tom told Ron that the Captain in charge of the Vice Squad was on the take according to Steve, and he wanted to get proof. Tom dressed like a mid-level accountant including horn-rim glasses and a pocket protector in his front pocket of his white button down shirt, and a disguise in case the video he was shooting got a reflected glimpse of his face. He drove down that night, parked a block away, turned on the video recorder, and walked inside. The first 2 days were a bust, except he got some good information about the local players, and propositioned by several waitresses that moonlighted as hookers. Finally on the 3rd night, Captain Adams showed up, and an hour later, someone sat next to him who had to be Nicky's lieutenant Spike, and slipped him a huge roll of bills. Tom caught the whole thing on tape including faces. That evening, he made 6 copies of the tape to deliver to the media when the time was right. He told Ron to be ready for action the next night, they were going hunting.

The next night was rainy and cold, which worked to their advantage. Tom handed Ron a muted green poncho, and told him to put it on as soon as they were out of the car. They were going to sneak into Spike's backyard, shoot his co-worker, and kneecap Spike then make him talk. Ron volunteered to shoot the first guy, since he couldn't be sure of hitting Spike's kneecap in the dark and pouring rain. Tom thought that was a good idea, and modified his plans accordingly. They snuck into the alleyway behind Spike's roost that he sold crack from when he wasn't supervising Nicky's stable of prostitutes. Since they were all heroin addicts and needed a nightly fix, they were pretty well cowed and easy to control, so he made some money on the side selling crack on a street corner. No one messed with them, because they knew Nicky's reputation as a ruthless psycho. Tom and Ron found comfortable spots in and around the bags of trash. Wearing their black clothes and their green ponchos with their faces blacked out in the dark alley, they blended in perfectly, and no one knew they were there. Around Midnight, business slowed down, and Spike's assistant met him on the sidewalk to make change, and give Spike the roll. This was what they were waiting for, and Ron slowly lifted his .22 rifle until it

was pointed at the goon's head, and touched the red laser as a GO code right before he fired, driving 40 grains of subsonic lead into the dealer's head, and blowing brains and blood all over Spike, who was down for the count seconds later with a shattered knee. Tom walked up to him, and slapped a piece of duct tape over his mouth, then taped his hands and feet. The two of them picked Spike up, and carried him further into the darkness to interrogate him.

Tom told him that he was going to take the tape off, and if he talked any louder than a whisper, he was going to shoot him in his other knee. Tom ripped the tape off, and pointed his hush puppy at Spike's knee.

"What the fuck did you do that for man, if you want the money, it's in my right pocket."

Tom shrugged and took the money. "Ok Spike, now I want information. I know you work for Nicky, and you killed my daughter. You will die for that, but how painfully you die depends on how good your information is."

"Nicky will kill you when he finds out!"

"Nicky's Next! I'm just getting warmed up. Hurry up and tell me before I decide to cap your other knee."

"Ok, ok, just don't shoot - what do you want to know?"

"Where's Nicky's hideout, and what security does he have."

"Fuck you man, I ain't telling you Jack!"

"Wrong Answer! " (Pop)

Spike screamed in agony, forgetting Tom's admonition not to yell. Tom pistol whipped him, and he shut up.

"Now you know I'm not kidding, let's get down to nut cutting, so to speak!"

Tom pulled out his big 7" RAT Bowie knife and lowered it to the black punk's crotch.

"You're next wrong answer or any hesitation, and I'll turn you into a girl!"

"Ok, he stays in that old abandoned warehouse on Commercial and Raymond."

"What's the address?"

“I don’t know the address!”

Tom’s knife sliced into Spike’s pants, and he said “Wait a minute - it’s right next to the tracks, 2 story grey building. Say’s Sam’s on the front door.”

Tom stopped the knife’s progress close enough to Spike’s manhood that he was sweating bullets and sitting VERY still.

“You still haven’t told me about his security setup.”

“There’s a guy on the roof, and another 1 on the foyer. He lives on the second floor, and his ho’s live on the first floor when they’re sleeping it off.”

“What do you mean Sleeping it off?”

“That’s another of my duties, I collect the rent, then give them all their injections. If they don’t make the rent, they don’t get their fix. If they’re holding out, I beat them. They do it twice, and Nicky beats them.”

“Any way around the security?”

“Their’s a building across the street with a view of the building that’s been burned out and abandoned for years.”

“Ok, Spike, you’ve been a good little stool pigeon , so I’m going to let you keep your nuts.”

Spike breathed a sigh of relief, thinking he might live through this, until Tom turned around, slapped another piece of duct tape over his mouth, and said in a menacing voice “You killed my little girl, so I’m going to give you a preview of Eternity in Hell! This jar is full of white Phosphorus. You remember Willie Pete from the Vietnam movies, and what it does if it lands on you. Well, I’ve designed this little device with a 30-second fuse for you to contemplate burning to death and eternity in Hellfire. Hope you enjoy the trip!”

Ron roughly grabbed Spike’s arms, and taped the jar between them securely, then lit the fuse and walked away. 30 seconds later, he heard a Pop, and the night was briefly turned into day, then he heard a muffled inhuman wail of someone burning to death. Walking back to the car he said to himself “One down, a whole bunch to go!”

Chapter 7 - Urban Renewal

The next morning, the grizzly murder of Spike including some gory photos was the lead story of all the Newark TV and newspapers. As usual, they got it wrong and attributed it to gang warfare instead of retribution. The Police were confused by the forensic evidence, and didn't know what to make of the crime, so they echoed the newspaper's guess that it must have been gang warfare. Captain Steve Legarse knew that his friend Tom was back, and it had only begun. He just hoped that Tom cleaned out the cesspool that Newark had become before he was caught. He kept his knowledge to himself, and actively worked to slow the investigation until Tom managed to get the rest of the dirtbags on his personal list. Tom decided to take the night off, and relocate cross-town to keep the police guessing. He talked to Ron, and he was feeling pretty good about exacting some vengeance for what happened to Jenni. He was back further in the alley for the finale, supposedly watching their exit and access to their car. Tom didn't want him to witness him torturing Spike in case it got messy, like it had a couple of times before.

Tom decided to do the rest of their "Urban Renewal" with their break-down .22 rifles because the distances were close, and the .22's were quiet, and he didn't want the police to know that they had a professional sniper on the loose until it was too late. A couple of Black Hills .308 Match slugs would quickly point out that they had a pro working the neighborhood. When Nicky saw the front page pictures of his Lieutenant barbequed, he got angry, and broke some stuff, beat up one of the girls, then got scared, thinking someone was after him, and doubled his security. Tom had guessed that Nicky would do just what he did, and hoped that by the time he got around to eliminating Nicky that his guard would be back down. Using Steve's list, he picked a target on the other side of Newark's slummy downtown area.

That night, they parked a couple of blocks away, carefully made their way to the alleyway across the street from a big-time dealer named Mikey, who was Nicky's main competition. Tom realized that if he worked it out that he alternated shooting different pushers that were in competition with each other, he might ignite a gang war, and they'd do his job for him, or at least make the police think that the deaths were due to turf battles in the drug business. Either way, it benefitted his cause. Right around Midnight, Mikey met with his street dealer to collect his roll, and 2 quiet pops resulted in 2 more dirtbags sporting a 3rd eye. Tom jogged across the street as soon as he was sure it was clear, and went through their pockets, and kept the money and the cheap handguns they were carrying, which could come in handy later.

The next morning's papers all had the apparent turf war on the front page, which was what Tom was hoping for. The police were being led around by the media, instead of the other way around, and no one except Captain Legarse realized that it was anything other than a drug turf battle. Tom and Ron took the next night off, and made plans for their next hit. He thought he'd try the Southeast section of Newark, since there were 3 major drug dealers there, and he could try to clean them up in 1 or 2 nights. Bennie, Malcolm and Lenny would be front page news

sometime in the next couple of days. Tom told Ron that it was going to get tougher from here on out, and that he might have to kill several Lieutenants to get to the dealers. Ron asked if they should use the hush puppies, and Tom said that if they worked the bolts fairly quickly, they'd get all of them before they had an idea of where they were shooting from, besides it would be easier to police up all the brass if they stuck to the turnbolt rifles. Without the brass, the police would be just guessing about the brand of ammo used, and couldn't link the crimes together, so they'd think they still had a gang war on their hands.

Tom laid out a route that could put them within shooting distance of all 3 drug dealers, with a short walk between their street corners, and get all 3 in 1 night. This time they weren't going to search the bodies. If 1 of them got a shot off, they'd abort shooting the other 2 groups and save them for another night. That night they drove into the Southeast section of Newark, and parked on a street with a bunch of cars, and got out. Tom had disabled the dome light weeks ago, since the light could give them away. They wore long coats because it was cold out, which hid the bags they were carrying with the NVG's and the break-down rifles. They walked silently down the alleyway, not even disturbing the neighborhood dogs thanks to the NVG's illuminating their paths, and kept them from making noise by stepping on debris of bumping into garbage cans and bags that seemed to be strewn everywhere. Tom whispered to Ron to switch his laser from the visible to the IR setting before they got in position.

Once they got close, they low crawled to the corner of the alley, and they started their surveillance. An hour later, Bennie made his appearance. Tom gave him a 3rd eye, and Ron shot his lieutenant while Tom reloaded. Their muscle came out of the shadows right at that time, not knowing what had happened to Bennie. Both of them fell to the ground with their brains blown all over the sidewalk in a macabre Rorschach pattern. Tom and Ron got up, and crawled back until they were way back into the alleyway, then crouched and walked around the corner to their next target. After a mile of skulking, they were close to Lenny's street corner, so they low crawled to the corner of the alleyway. Lenny either wasn't the brightest dope dealer in the neighborhood, or didn't get the word that it was open season on dope dealers. 5 seconds after they set up, Lenny and his Lieutenant were both sporting 3rd eyes, and leaking brain matter all over the sidewalk.

Malcolm's turf was a little farther away, but too close to risk driving the car. 3 hours later, they arrived in Malcolm's hood. He must have been more experienced or paranoid than Lenny, since he didn't show his face until after 2 am when it was closing time for the crack dealers. Tom and Ron got a bonus, because all of Malcolm's lieutenants met him on his porch to give him his cut of that night's action. Ron and Tom whispered in each other's ears, and planned the shoot. Tom was going to shoot Malcolm first, then they'd get as many Lieutenants as possible. They were to leave as soon as one of the lieutenants discharged a gun, which would alert the neighborhood, and make their job tougher. Ron made sure his laser was still in IR mode, and as soon as Tom fired, Ron fired as quickly as he could guarantee head shots on targets. They got 4 out of 5 of his lieutenants when 1 fired his gun, but it was no where near them. Tom took him

out with his next shot, but all the dogs in the neighborhood were barking. Tom and Ron backed down the alley and laid low for a while, then started sneaking out, only to be surprised by a German Shepard. Tom had no choice, if the dog barked, he would give them away, so he shot it in the head with his Hush Puppy. Tom loved dogs, but valued his freedom more, besides he hadn't gotten Nicky yet. The dog dropped noiselessly, and Tom had activated the slide lock, so the gun was virtually silent, plus it didn't eject any telltale brass. 2 hours later, they safely arrived at the car, and drove sedately back to the apartment, coasted into the parking lot with the headlights off, and quietly got into the apartment. They talked in whispers if at all, took showers to remove the camouflage, and went to bed.

The next morning's news was screaming about the massacre and rumors of an all-out turf war covered the first 3 pages of the papers. Ron and Tom never read the papers, but they saw it on the TV news. They decided to lay low for a couple of days and see what happened. 3 days later, the news had moved on to other hot button issues, and they decided to drive around to see if the natives were still restless that night. As near as they could tell, it was back to business as usual, except a few big-time dealers were surrounded by more muscle, and looked like they were more vigilant. Tom knew if he waited a few days, the muscle would get lazy, and they could resume shooting dirtbags again. They stopped at a pay phone, and Tom dialed a number from memory. What he heard made him want to kill every dirtbag in Newark. He didn't say anything until they were back home. They were sitting on the couch, and Tom told Ron "Ron, I got bad news. Jenni committed suicide the other day. Your mom left a message with my message service. I can't go out in public, but you might be able to get to uncle Tony's place and talk to her. Tell her I love her, and this will be over soon. If we survive, I'll tap the other account, and we'll move to Costa Rica."

"Son of a Bitch! She was a fighter, why did this happen?"

"That's what I need you to find out. My guess is someone at the hospital screwed up, and she got a look at herself before they were finished rebuilding her face. With all the pain pills she was taking, all she'd have to do is hoard a couple and take them all at once, and she'd OD."

Tom and Ron sat on the couch and cried for a couple of minutes. Tom was mad because he couldn't protect his little girl, and Ron loved his sister. She was the beautiful one of the family, and he knew she was going places. Now she was on a slab in a morgue somewhere, and they were killing the people responsible, but they still had some guilty parties to kill in a month or so, then they could disappear and rebuild their lives in another country.

The next day, Ron rode the bus to Uncle Tony's house, got off 2 blocks away, and checked his surroundings for anything suspicious or out of the ordinary. He walked over to Tony's house, and his uncle opened the door. "Tony, it's Ron, is my mom here?"

Lisa ran to the door, grabbed her son, and held on for dear life, sobbing hysterically. He knew

he had to be strong for his mom, and be careful what he said around Tony and his wife, he couldn't involve them and risk their lives. Once his mom stopped crying, Ron said they needed to go out back and talk.

"Mom, what happened?"

"The docs said she took an overdose of morphine. They fired some nurse, but it really wasn't her fault. Once Jenni regained consciousness and had the tube removed, I talked to her, and she related the horrors that happened to her. I hope that when you find the people who did this to her, they die as painfully as they can. They raped my little daughter! She was saving herself for marriage like the Sisters told her, only to get gang raped and tortured by some monster, then beaten practically to death! Why did this happen to her - She was a good girl!"

"Mom, Dad explained it to me - it seems there's a prostitution ring run by a sleezebag that kidnaps girls from Catholic High schools, and turns them into prostitutes, or they're sold as sexual slaves to some rich perverts. We killed his lieutenant, and we're in the process of taking out the rest of the pimps and pushers in Newark. Later, when he thinks it's safe, we're going to come back and kill him. Dad wanted me to give you a message. He told me to tell you he loves you, and if we survive, the three of us are going to start over in Costa Rica after he taps another secret account. It should all be over in a little over a month either way. Mom - you can't say anything to Tony - we can't involve him any more than he already is. If we get caught, we're going to die or go to prison for life, and I don't want you or Tony to go to prison either. I shot one of the bastards that killed Jenni, and when his head exploded, somehow I felt better. I need to get back to dad so we can finish what we started. I love you mom, bye for now!"

Lisa held her son for a while, then he looked at his watch. "I've got 10 minutes to catch the next bus - I've got to go now!" Lisa kissed Ron on his cheek, and said "I love you son, tell your dad I love him, and hopefully we'll be together soon!" She let him go, and he walked quickly to the corner, and caught the bus with a minute to spare. When he got back to the apartment, he related the conversation to his dad, and Tom could see the fire in Ron's eyes. The fires of vengeance still burned brightly. He wanted to kill everyone involved in the death of his sister. Tom wanted to oblige him in the worst way! The next night, they went out and shot 4 pushers and 3 pimps. By now they were 2/3 through Steve's list, and it was still almost a month away from the Police Chief's convention. Ron agreed with Tom that while the pushers and dealers might be the most responsible, the reprehensible behavior of the corrupt politicians running Newark was the reason they were still in business. The head of the vice department was on the take, and he guessed most of the department was too. He knew the Mayor and City Council were too worried about bringing in new developers to do anything serious about the crime problem in Newark, and the crooks that got caught took the short jail sentences as a cost of doing business.

Over the next couple of weeks, they killed more pushers and pimps, and finally Tom said "It's

time - we're going to scout out Nicky's place, and destroy it. This is the second most dangerous part of the plan. We could easily get killed at any moment from here until we're in Costa Rica."

"So what are we waiting for, the sooner we get started the sooner we're through."

"Son, regardless of what happens from here on out - I wanted you to know I love you, and I'm proud of you!"

"Me too dad - now let's cut the mushy stuff and get to work!"

That afternoon, they risked going out in daylight to cruise the perimeter of Nicky's realm. They spotted a 10-story commercial building with a old faded "for sale" sign in the window. It was within 100 yards of Nicky's place, with line of sight to both floors of Nicky's pad. They drove back home, and Tom told Ron of his plan. They were going to break out the long guns, set up a 2-man sniper hide on the 5th floor, which should give them line of sight to both floors of Nicky's place, and they'd start a 24-hour surveillance. Once they had all their info, they'd make a plan, and take them down hard. They packed everything they'd need for 48 hours to be on the safe side, broke into the building, and set up a 2-man Sniper hide near a window overlooking Nicky's building. Tom told Ron that they'd have to crawl into and out of the observation room, and not to go into the adjacent rooms, but to use the honey pot he brought for a toilet in the back room, and do all their cooking and eating in the far room in case they had NVG's or thermal sights.

Once it got dark, they crawled into position, and used their night scopes and NVG's to observe everything going on at Nicky's place. Tom could tell the roof guard was bored with his duty, and spent most of his time sleeping in a lawn chair. He was armed with a cheap .45 pistol instead of a rifle, and he didn't have any night vision equipment he could see. Later that night, the guy in the Foyer made an appearance at the door to let someone in, and he was only armed with a 12-gauge shotgun. Tom thought "Amateur Hour" but still they completed the 24-hour surveillance to be on the safe side. It was a good thing he did, because around 2 am, a black limousine drove up, and two goons carrying submachine guns got out, then a 3rd man got out carrying an expensive Haliburton case. He went to the top floor, and Nicky greeted him like a long-lost cousin. He opened the case with 1 of his guards inside the room, and one outside, and Tom could see what looked like pounds of white powder. Nicky went to the door and 1 of his girls came in and tasted it, then the guy with the case made up a hit and injected her. Less than a minute later, she slumped to the floor, and Nicky checked her pulse. She must have been still alive, because Nicky brought out a matching case full of cash, and gave it to the other man. They shook hands, and he left.

Nicky disappeared for several hours, then it was like rush hour. All kinds of vehicles were outside, and people were running in and out of the building. The only increase in security was the placing of 2 more muscle on the street corners armed with shotguns. By 5 am, everything was quiet at Nicky's lair. Tom talked to Ron, and they agreed to do the hit tomorrow night. They slept through the day, then the next night, Tom took a risk and cut out 2 firing ports out of the glass. Ron policed everything and packed the food, wrappers, and anything they brought in back in the duffle bags, or into trash bags. When it was full dark, they were waiting for Nicky to show himself near the window. Tom explained that taking someone through a window required 2 shots spaced closely together, 1 to break the glass, and the other to shoot the target. Tom told Ron he was going to shoot first to break the glass, since Tom was the better shot, even though 150 yards was a chip shot for both of them. He told Ron what elevation setting to use on his rifle, and to leave the laser off, since it would reflect on the glass, and might give away their position. They were going to shoot Nicky first, then the guy on the roof, and the guy in the foyer if he showed himself. He would prefer to burn the building down with Nicky still alive inside it, but it wasn't worth the risk to get close enough to do it.

Right at 9:00, Nicky stood facing the window, and surveyed his kingdom. Ron said "Target" when his crosshairs lined up with Nicky's head, and Tom counted down from 3. "3...2...1...Fire!" On the command "Fire" Ron touched the trigger of his rifle, and the glass window of Nicky's office shattered, followed milliseconds later by a pink cloud as Nicky's head exploded. Ron shifted aim to the roof guy, and blew his head apart right as he woke up from his nap. The foyer guy heard the thump of Nicky's body hitting the floor, and ran up to check on his boss, and paid for his loyalty with his life. Tom's next bullet gave him a 3rd eye and sent him to join his boss. They stayed at their shooting positions for 5 minutes scanning with their scopes to make sure they got everyone, then evacuated out the back of the building, taking everything with them. Tom made sure to pick up the brass, and pocketed it. They drove home, stopped at a grocery store dumpster on the way home and tossed the bagged trash and dropped the brass down a storm sewer opening. Ron felt much better, now that all they had to do was blow the Garden State Convention Center into low orbit.

Chapter 8 - The Big Bang

Using his “Ron Heinz” legend again, Tom got a job working on a remodeling project at the Garden State Convention Center. He didn’t want to use that legend again, but being able to get inside the building without major scrutiny was worth it. One day he smuggled the bomb inside his lunch box, and instead of going up to the work site, as soon as he was out of sight, headed toward the sub-basements hundreds of feet below ground level. He was exploiting a little-known vulnerability of the old building and using a tiny bomb to cause catastrophic damage to the building. He located the main Natural Gas pipe where it came up from the distribution pipe and fixed a small piece of plastic explosive to the pipe with an electronic timer. 6 feet away was an unused distribution panel that Tom installed the rest of his bomb inside. He knew exactly when Sarah Bradley’s keynote speech was scheduled to start, and set the timer for 5 minutes into her 15-minute address. The bomb was very small and well hidden, yet he took some more precautions on his way out to fool any bomb sniffing dogs that might be sent down there to check for bombs. He walked back upstairs, and resumed his job. Later that week, he quit and made his plans for his escape and relocation to Costa Rica.

The day the bomb was scheduled to go off, Ron took a great risk and picked up Captain Steve Legarse. Since it was his day off, Tom knew that he wasn’t much of a threat. He took him to an abandoned building with a view of the Garden Center, and 5 minutes before the bomb was set to go off he told him about the bomb. Steve freaked out, and knowing he couldn’t get word to the police to evacuate the building, begged Tom to disarm it.

“I can’t if I wanted to, it’s on a timer and I’m more that 5 minutes away from the bomb. We’re just outside of Ground Zero, so I’d stay away from any windows in about 5 minutes.”

“What have you done - I agreed to let you kill some dirtbags, not the Chief and the Mayor!”

“My definition of Dirtbag is obviously different than yours! Why should I kill all the pimps and the pushers, when the reason they’re in business in the first place is City Hall! I videotaped Captain Adams taking a substantial payoff from Spike. Remember him - he got barbequed a couple of nights later and told me the whole rotten story. I did some checking and confirmed it. The entire Newark PD is on the take, and protecting the very criminals they were supposed to be arresting. Your story about the Downtown developers didn’t wash, so I checked. There are NO new developments planned or announced for Newark. The Mayor and City Hall were in it up to their necks! Some of the major distributors were paying off City Hall to keep the police in line, and just arrest the small fry. That explained why my list only included small fry instead of the major dealers. You must have freaked out when I started shooting the Big Boys. I’m really disappointed in you Steve, you could have been an outstanding Lawman, instead you’re a common Criminal! I checked your financial records, and you have way too much money in the bank based on a Lieutenant’s salary, and your house is paid off.. You’ve got no apparent other

income sources that the IRS knows about, so that leaves the only option - you're on the take too! Why Steve?"

"They offered me a simple choice - take the money, or they'd kill me and my family!"

"Why didn't you tell me - I could have taken all those dirtbags out by myself years ago - so could have the Cops if you'd have had the balls, instead of acting like nice little lambs and taking the money."

"Tom, the entire department was on the take, including the Chief and the Mayor, what was I going to do!"

"I don't know - Quit, move - you had other options, instead you took the easy way out, and now you know too much. I'm sorry Steve, but I've got to do this!" Tom pulled his hush puppy from behind his back where he was hiding it, and shot Steve right in the forehead. 30 seconds later, a huge mushroom cloud appeared where the Garden State Convention Center used to be. Tom threw himself flat, put his hands over his ears, and kept his mouth open. Seconds later, the blast wave rocked the building, and bounced Tom an inch or so. Once things had quieted down, he ran out of the building and started his escape plan.

At the Garden Center, Sarah Bradley had just started her speech when she thought she smelled something, and was thinking that someone could have better manners when she was enveloped by a huge fireball. The New York City and New Jersey Police Chiefs were sitting on the platform with her, accompanied by several prominent Democrats. The audience was full of left-wing anti-gun movers and shakers for the entire East Coast. The police later listed the number of fatalities at over 10,000. They assumed it was a terrorist bomb, when it was actually the second "shot heard round the world". Geraldo Rivera was reporting for CNN 600 yards away from the building when it exploded, and a huge piece of concrete landed on him, squashing him like a bug right in the middle of a live feed.

Lisa gave notice, and met Ron earlier that morning. They packed everything and loaded it into a truck that Ron bought. Tom met them an hour later at his old apartment, loaded a couple of extra suitcases, and left for New York City. They drove to the waterfront, and Tom located the appropriate dock. A Costa Rican container ship was just finishing loading bound for Costa Rica. Thanks to his old CIA contacts, Tom knew that the captain sold extra berthing spaces on a no questions asked basis for \$5 thousand each. Tom used the money he stole from the drug dealers to pay the captain, who urged them to hurry aboard, they were ready to sail. 2 weeks later, they docked in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica. Tom had 3 passports with a "universal visa" or \$50 bill tucked into each, and handed them to the Custom's official. He took the passports, pocketed the bills, and said "Bienvenidos, Welcome to Costa Rica." He stamped their passports, and they grabbed their suitcases and made their way to the taxi stand. Tom amazed them both when he gave the taxi driver the name of the hotel in fluent Spanish. Once they were

in the 2 room suite, Tom sat them down and explained a few things to them.

“Ron, Lisa, we’re safe, or as safe as we can be. Costa Rica loves Americans, and I transferred the remaining funds in the 2 slush funds to another Bahamian account, which gives us a little over \$2 Million to live on. As you can see, the Costa Ricans are poor, and the cost of living is very low in this country. I could buy a large hacienda and spend right around \$10 grand total. Ron, you never have to work again, but with your knowledge and fluent English, you could get a construction supervisor position down here paying more than you ever made in the States. If I were you, I’d learn the Costa Rican dialect of Spanish, and marry a sweet Costa Rican girl and settle down. Most of the Country is Roman Catholic, so we’ll fit right in. My days of being a government hit man are over, I’m officially retired.”

“Honey, I’ve got some good news. I filed a Missing Person’s report just like you asked me, and the Insurance Company mailed a check and a death certificate the day before you arrived to leave for Costa Rica. Since you’re officially dead, you should be in the clear, and \$200,000 richer.”

“Why don’t we give the money to Ron, I don’t need it, and he could live wherever he wanted in Costa Rica on the interest, and raise a family.” Lisa nodded, took the check out, and handed it to Ron.

“Here you go dear. I guess Christmas came early.”

Ron had noticed how beautiful the Costa Rican young women were when they drove past a beach, he could get used to living here!

The End